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AFGHANISTAN

CASE STUDY Community Linkages Created

Communities improve their relationships with the local government through meetings



Photo: USAID/CBSG

Community members meeting with the district governor of Charbolak in Balkh Province.

CHALLENGE Remote communities in Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan, and Sari Pul provinces are disconnected from their local government, which allows insurgents to take advantage of the power vacuum and exert influence on community decision makers.

INITIATIVE Community meetings are an effective tool for identifying community grievances and creating communication and cooperation between unstable communities and Afghan government officials. USAID creates linkages between local governments and communities through the planning and implementation of small grants less than \$25,000. The communities select and implement the projects in coordination with Afghan government representatives. After linkages between the communities and the local government are created, communities are encouraged to collaborate with their local government to ensure and maintain stability. Community meetings are a necessary activity to help extend the Afghan government's reach from the district and provincials level to the village level in unstable areas.

RESULTS Since October 2010, local government authorities have met with communities in Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan, and Sari Pul provinces more than 2,050 times in the form of project development meetings and opening and closing ceremonies. Additionally, new relationships are being forged because of USAID-funding and the community implementation process.

The bottom-up approach adopted by USAID has had a concrete and meaningful impact, extending the reach of the Afghan government to the village level in the focus areas of the project. As a result of the increased interaction with the local government, communities are now coming together to reject insurgent efforts to disrupt projects and stability.